

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH REHABILITATION SERVICES**



**Testimony of
Vincent N. Schiraldi
Director
Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services**

**Committee on Human Services
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Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to discuss the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2010 for the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services. DYRS' mission is to improve public safety by building on the strengths of the young people in our care in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety. Our vision has consistently been to achieve this goal by creating decent and rehabilitative secure care *and* to develop a continuum of community based care for the youth under our supervision that is second to none in the nation. Fiscal Year 2010 builds upon several major initiatives to improve both secure care *and* our continuum of care.

Our objectives are to:

1. Provide proven community-based programs, services, supports, and opportunities that help young people to turn their lives around, achieve, and flourish
2. Operate secure facilities that are safe, humane, and address youths' needs by building on their strengths

3. Develop a performance-driven culture and infrastructure focusing on improved outcomes for youth in our care and supported by a qualified and well-trained professional staff, and
4. Provide services, supports, and opportunities to young people that will reduce their delinquent behavior, prepare them to be productive adults, and promote public safety.

In FY 2010, DYRS will meet the challenge of improving public safety by building on the strengths of youth in our care in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety. DYRS will continue to ensure that all programs and policies are grounded in the fundamental philosophy, principles, and practices of Positive Youth Development so that young people are given opportunities to make important choices that affect their lives in structured and safe environments. This proposed budget-- in the amount of \$88,716,816--focuses on those important goals.

Case Management:

This proposed budget fully supports the agency's commitment to quality supervision of the approximately 720 youth in its care. Foremost, the staffing of case managers will ensure caseloads are low and performance is high. Since 2006, DYRS has made significant strides to reform and improve our case management system. We have sought to improve the workforce, increase accountability, and forge a new direction – away from a deficit- based, solely punitive system to one of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and accountability for youth and staff. In early 2007, DYRS began training its entire staff, including case workers in PYD.

Before DYRS began reforming the case management division, there were 20 case managers and social workers in the agency; the average case load size was 38; the

case workers were only required to have one contact per month for each of the youth on their case loads who were placed in the community; and there were minimal services that case workers had available to connect to their youth.

We have increased the number of case managers in the agency and began hiring an energetic group of staff who embrace the reform and welcome the new accountability. Of the 27 current case managers, 19 were hired since 2007. Their average caseload size is 27, and they are now required to have six contacts per month with each youth on their case load. Moreover, services and resources available to youth have been significantly expanded.

In addition, we have implemented a new Positive Education Initiative for all future employees who have regular and direct care with youth under our care and supervision. Under this initiative, new employees will have to meet a requirement of a minimum number of credit hours of college education in order to be qualified for a position with DYRS. For example, entry level facility staff will be required to have 30 college credits; more advanced facility staff, 60 college credits; and case managers, Bachelor's degrees.

In order to increase the contacts and time case managers spend with youth, DYRS has also worked to relieve case managers of other duties. We have hired full-time court representatives to attend hearings on behalf of case workers to reduce the time case managers spend in court; assigned administrative assistants to every case management unit; hired a full-time placement expeditor to help workers resource case plans; and are in the process of hiring full-time Youth Family Team Meeting Coordinators to help coordinate the family group conferencing meetings that are essential to our case planning process

DYRS has re-written its Case Management Manual and since October 2007 trained all case management staff on the new manual. The new protocols raised the accountability for staff and increased the supervision committed youth receive. As we have continued to develop new protocols and discovered gaps in the case management system, DYRS has updated the Case Management Manual twice since October 2007 and has recently published a revised Manual. The new Case Management Manual also allows the agency to discipline employees who are not performing up to the new standard. Over the past three years, 24 of the current case management staff have been disciplined for failure to adhere to the new case management standards, including seven who have been terminated.

In November 2007, DYRS implemented a new management information system. This system allows the agency to track and store detailed information about youth committed to our care and it also alerts managers when case workers have not completed important assignments.

Beginning this summer, an extremely robust set of services and supports will begin with the implementation of the Lead Entity/Regional Service Coalition model. However, even while planning our much anticipated Lead Entity/Regional Service Coalition initiative, DYRS brought on a range of new community services that case managers have available to support their youth. Youth who are placed in the community receive a range of services, supports and opportunities, including evidence-based programs such as (1) intensive third party monitoring wherein community-based organizations provide intensive supervision – including a minimum of three times daily in-person contact with youth in the community. One hundred and fifty committed youth currently receive this service; (2) Multi-Systemic Therapy and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care; (3) transformative

mentoring for groups and individuals; and (4) education and innovative workforce development programs like paid employment with the Earth Conservation Corps and going to Mississippi to rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Local residential settings such as therapeutic group homes, traditional group homes, therapeutic foster homes, and independent living programs prepare youth for a full transition into the community. DYRS has added 14 new Therapeutic Group Homes in and around the city. These Therapeutic Group Homes differ significantly and are much improved from the traditional group homes in that they are smaller, have professionally trained staff, and offer more therapeutic supports. In addition, Residential Treatment Centers provide youth with behavior modification, psychiatric treatment, and substance abuse treatment in a secure or staff secure therapeutic setting.

Further, in order to better serve the youth and families in our system, DYRS has begun regionalizing its case management staff to be in the communities where the youth and their families reside. Prior to the reform effort, all the case managers and social workers worked out of a downtown office because of its proximity to the court. In FY 2010, case workers will be deployed in the neighborhoods of the youth on their case loads.

We have already opened a field office in Ward 8 on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and this will be followed by an office in Ward 7 at the Merritt Middle School -- projected to open in March 2010 -- where we will be co-located with DOES, CFSA, and one of the DYRS Lead Entities for the Regional Service Coalition initiative. Additionally, in FY10, we anticipate opening two more

offices for case workers with youth who reside in Wards 5 and 6 and youth living in Wards 1-4.

None of this was in place prior to the effort to reform and improve the case management division. All of these many reforms and others not mentioned show the painstaking work we have done over the past few years to vastly improve our case management system. We certainly agree there is work left to be done and improvement still needed. We welcome this committee's encouragement and urging to continue the reforms

A New Sixty-Bed Secure Juvenile Rehabilitation Facility:

A long-term secure treatment center will provide services to the most in need of rehabilitation in a secure setting. Next month, the Oak Hill Youth Center will be replaced with a state-of-the art secure rehabilitation facility with a 60-bed capacity. DYRS relied on the analysis and advice from experts in the field concerning the best practices in both right-sizing a locked facility for committed youth as well as for implementing the most cost effective treatment program. We also relied upon the findings and recommendations of the *Jerry M.* panel, research provided by the *Jerry M.* Special Arbiter, recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Youth Safety and Juvenile Justice Reform, as well as the DYRS enabling legislation and provisions passed as part of the 2004 Omnibus Juvenile Justice Act which required the new facility to incorporate "best practices" in the field. All of these sources recommended or required that DYRS provide services to youth in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety.

Based on these legislative mandates to place youth in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety, DYRS commissioned a study of the

committed population, Oak Hill utilization and national best practices by the Annie E. Casey Foundation Strategic Consulting Group (CSCG). This organization provides research and technical assistance to states and localities across the country on juvenile justice and child welfare issues. The Casey Consulting Group conducted a detailed analysis of the youth committed to DYRS as well as the utilization of Oak Hill. They concluded that “If Oak Hill’s replacement houses only the most serious offenders but places them for longer periods consistent with the Missouri approach, the District should require between 40 and 60 secure beds.”

DYRS subsequently analyzed commitment data during negotiations with *Jerry M. Plaintiffs* and the Special Arbiter concerning the size of the proposed new facility. At the time of the analysis we assumed approximately 260 new commitments per year (the average yearly commitments since that time are 279, driven mostly by 2008 with 340), with 20% of that population being treated at Oak Hill for approximately nine months (270 days; since inception the DC Model Program length of stay is 263 days – nearly four times the stay of youth prior to my administration). The 20% figure is based on the Casey analysis of the offense severity of youth and was subsequently validated by the findings of the 2006 new commitment Structured Decision Making Risk Assessment research conducted in 2008 by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency that found that 20.4% of new commitments were High Risk/High Offense Severity.

In 2006, DYRS made the following calculations for sizing the new facility:

- A 60 bed capacity facility has 21,900 bed days available (60x365) each year
- 260 new commitments per year with 20% High Risk = 52 youth in need of the DC Model Program
- 52 youth averaging 270 days in custody = 14,040 bed days needed

- 21,900 bed days available – 14,040 bed days needed = 7,860 surplus bed days per year
- 7,860 surplus bed days / 270 days in custody = capacity for 29 additional youth to complete the DC Model Program during the year and/or space for approximately 5-10 committed youth awaiting placement in other secure facilities such as Residential Treatment Centers.

There is further justification for a facility of this size. I have already mentioned that the implementation of the Lead Entity/Regional Services Coalition initiative will begin this summer. One of the key model sites we examined in creating service coalitions was Wayne County, Michigan, which includes the city of Detroit. As of December, when my staff spent three days with Wayne County officials and community-based service providers, the county (which has a population nearly four times as large as DC) had less than 40 committed youth locked in state training schools. When Wayne County began its regional service coalitions less than ten years ago there were more than 500 youth in training schools. We firmly believe that the continuum of care we have built to-date, including evidence-based programs and promising practices that specifically deal with youth and families in serious need and at high risk, coupled with our service coalitions, will provide the supervision and services as well as public safety that makes having a 60-bed facility feasible and cost-effective.

The charts below show how the population at OHYC has changed and will evolve after the new facility is opened. As you can see, in 2005, the entire population of Oak Hill was waiting for something to happen (i.e., to have their case resolved through conviction or acquittal, to go to a shelter home pre-trial, or to go to another placement). No one was serving a sentence or being rehabilitated through a course

of treatment. We first removed the detained population to YSC; then, with the help of your Speedy Trial Act, eliminated the waiting list for youth to go to shelters.

At present, the awaiting placement population is being removed from the facility, mostly through more expeditious case planning and placement expediting so youth aren't languishing awaiting placement any longer. Additionally, secure, staff-secure, and community programs for youth awaiting placement have been implemented or are in the process of being developed so again, youth aren't simply waiting to start their rehabilitation. Because of these carefully designed and carefully implemented steps, from moving detained youth to YSC, to eliminating youth waiting to go to shelters through speedy trials, to expediting placements of pending placement youth and adding community based programs so youth no longer have to wait just because there isn't a bed, DYRS has essentially created a sixty-bed, locked treatment program for our deepest end youth where no treatment beds for such youth previously existed. That facility was on the higher end of what was recommended by the consultants, and we're confident that this facility size, along with the improvements made in secure care, mental health, and education at the new facility, will make the new facility one of the best secure care environments for delinquent youth in the country.

SECURE POPULATION BOTH DETAINED AND COMMITTED

	Pre-2005		Today		April '09	
	Pop.	Avg. L.O.S.	Pop.	Avg. L.O.S.	Capacity	Avg. L.O.S.
Detained						
Detained at OHYC	95	32	0	-	0	-
Detained Waiting Shelter	30	18				
Detained at YSC	N/A	-	66	22	88	-
Committed						
Awaiting Placement at OHYC	125	79	23	19	0	-
Awaiting Placement at DYRS "Exodus" Program	N/A	-	N/A	-	6	
RTC Placements for youth Awaiting Placement	N/A	-	N/A	-	49	-
DC Model Treatment at OHYC	N/A	-	43	231	60	-
Total	250 youth	79 days	162 youth		203 youth	

INITIAL AWAITING PLACEMENT OPTIONS
(DYRS will seek to expand beds as necessary)

New Facility (DYRS)	Psychiatric Solutions, Inc. (PSI) Children's Treatment Solutions (CTS)	Psychiatric Institute of Washington	KidLink	Exodus House (DYRS)
Five-10 Beds	Medicaid	Medicaid	Medicaid	Six Beds
Serves youth awaiting ICPC Clearance to move to a locked placement.	Serves youth in need of additional evaluations/testing before placement in a PRTF. Provides a therapeutic milieu prior to a longer-term placement.	Serves youth who may be in need of services in of additional evaluations/testing before placement in a PRTF. Youth with a previous acute stay at PIW.	Serves youth in need of additional evaluations/testing before placement in a PRTF. Provides a therapeutic milieu prior to a longer-term placement.	Serves youth waiting for a placement in a non-secure setting Therapeutic Group Home of Foster Home or Independent Living
Short-term beds in a secure setting – prior to placement in a longer term facility.	Largest umbrella of Medicaid and Non-Medicaid Programs closest to the District.	History of successfully working with DYRS youth.	More than 40 educational and specialized residential behavioral treatment programs.	Serves as a structured, short-term therapeutic facility for youth waiting to go to a non-secure placement.
Located in Laurel, MD	Pines has three campuses (Brighton, Crawford and Kempsville)	Located In DC	Keystone Newport News	Located In DC

Public Safety:

As we announced recently and shared in our March 11th Performance Oversight hearing, DYRS has launched several initiatives directly aimed at improving public safety. First, the agency has proposed changes to the D.C. Municipal Regulations governing the community placement of juvenile offenders. One of the major changes is to expand the number of days the agency has to make placement decisions. The expansion from three days to five days is more efficient and gives the agency more time to make placement decisions consistent with public safety. The proposed regulations were posted in the DC Register on April 3, and are expected to be finalized in May 2009. Second, we have developed a much more detailed Sanctions Matrix to expand and increase the interventions case managers can take with youth who are non-compliant with their release agreements. Third, DYRS has also developed a rewards process to incentivize good behavior among youth. Fourth, in collaboration with MPD, Court Social Services, and other sister agencies, DYRS is doubling the number of youth in the Partnership for Success program, where our most at-risk youth receive intensive supervision and services from DYRS, MPD, and community organizations. Fifth, DYRS launched the Community Partnership on Public Safety. Beginning last month, we meet weekly with community organizations that work in the city's toughest neighborhoods, where most of our youth come from, and we share vital information about gangs, beefs, and other neighborhood dynamics.

Finally, DYRS has identified its top 60 youth most at risk of committing a violent offense and we are assigning these cases to workers who will have a smaller case load and conduct weekly case reviews. These youth will receive intensive supervision, either through the Partnership for Success program, Intensive Third Party Monitoring, Electronic Monitoring, or an Evening Reporting Center.

Cost Savings:

The four million cost savings projected for DYRS in FY 2010 represent efficiencies in the agency's operations. These decreases will not have an adverse impact on services to youth under the supervision of the agency.

First, a cost savings of \$806,902 is realized from annualizing 13 vacant positions in the Detained Youth Services Program. In November 2008, the positions were eliminated due a Reduction In Force (RIF) to our Home Detention program, which Court Social Services essentially took over because youth in pre-trial status are under their supervision. The personal services budget is also reduced by \$213,028 from the elimination of three vacant positions in the Agency Management Program. Next, a costs savings of \$135,201 results from the transition of facility maintenance to a contracted provider, which includes 13.5 FTEs in property management. For the Committed Services Program, ten vacant positions and three FTEs will be eliminated resulting in a \$626,600 cost reduction. This realignment of staffing reflects the closing of Oak Hill and the operation of the new smaller facility. There is a personal services cost decrease of \$213,309 in the Medical Services Program from the elimination of three vacant positions and two filled positions. However, the same level of medical care will be provided to youth. Under a new payment rate structure for Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities, there will be a \$993,713 local budget cost savings from projected federal reimbursement for DYRS placements. Further over the past year, DYRS has focused on improving the agency's access to Medicaid facilities and services for youth in need of placement at a Psychiatric Treatment Facility. So, while in May 2008, 20% of DYRS' RTC placements were paid for by Medicaid dollars, by February 2009, 54% of youth in RTC's were paid for by Medicaid dollars. City-wide, District government anticipates increasing the Medicaid rate for youth in

RTC's, which we believe will further help us increase the percent of our youth who are in Medicaid reimbursed placements, as current providers to whom we are paying full freight for youth convert to Medicaid eligible facilities.

Additionally, to align the FY 2010 budget with past expenditures and projected utilization, DYRS will:

- reduce out-of-town travel by \$20,000
- reduce purchases in supplies by \$30,000
- reduce local travel by \$13,700
- reduce out-of-town travel to conferences by \$20,000
- reduce payment for membership dues by \$5,500, and
- reduce IT contractual services by \$30,000; and reduce new furniture purchases by \$90,000.

Also, revised fixed costs estimates from OPM, DPW and OCTO result in savings of \$152,490 for occupancy, fleet management, and telecommunications.

The budget includes an offset of \$21,600 for OCP procurement assessments to align with revised estimates. There is also offset \$200,000 to cover the cost of medication for both the detained and committed youth populations. These costs were previously incurred by the Department of Mental Health.

Eventually, all youth in secure care return to their communities. To enhance its continuum of community-based care for youth under its supervision, DYRS will increase services for youth transitioning from secure confinement back into the community. The additional \$980,000 in funds will provide pre-release mentoring

and life skills services to youth; and upon their release, additional supervision through daily in-home contacts.

Conclusion:

In FY 09, DYRS made significant progress in meeting our overall goal to dramatically improve our continuum of care, thereby making our neighborhoods safer and engaging young people and their families in the process of turning their lives around. Next month, we will forever close the doors of the Oak Hill Youth Center. We will implement the Lead/Entity Service Coalition model. Our case management reforms are well underway and we have launched major, collaborative initiatives to ensure public safety. But, as I said at the March 11th Performance Oversight Hearing, while I am not satisfied yet with where we are, I am encouraged by the progress – including having the agency go from being on the brink of Court Receivership four short years ago to being recognized this past year by Harvard’s Kennedy School as one of the “Top 50” government programs in the country; to having lead counsel for the Plaintiffs’ in Jerry M testifying before this committee that they have seen more progress since 2005 than in the 20 previous years and would not sue the agency today; to seeing a reduction in recidivism amongst our youth compared to 2004; and witnessing a continued decline in serious juvenile crime. In FY10, we will remain steadfast in our focus to become a juvenile justice agency of which District residents and the nation can be proud. I am pleased to submit the FY10 budget.

Thank you, again Chairman Wells, for this opportunity and I will be glad to answer any questions.